

THE GLEANER.

And Northumberland, Kent, Gloucester, and Restigouche Schediasma.

Volume XIII.

Nec araneorum sane textus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.

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THE GLEANER.

THE BRITISH MAGAZINES FOR FEBRUARY.

From Blackwood's Magazine.

TEN YEARS OF THE WHIGS.

Whether they have perished bodily as well as officially is still a matter of discussion; for, with the exception of one or two of their number, they have all disappeared. All questions on the subject must be answered in the melancholy cadence of the Eastern Echo—a voice cries, Where are they? and echoes answers Where?—yet it is not impossible that they may still be in existence. It was but the other day that a cabinet of toads and bats to the number of thirteen, the exact Whitehall muster roll, were dug out of a block of stone in Essex, all alive, after a quiet incarceration of a hundred and fifty years. The tale of the "Seven Sleepers" of Ephesus has been laughed at as a legend, but perhaps our posterity may match it as a history. In no other place will the Whig cabinet find a place in human record. Englishmen will turn away from their waste of years, and their feebleness of government, with wonder that such things could have been in a great, active, and intelligent country. Their whole administration will be regarded as a dull yet uneasy dream; an interval of rest without refreshment, and of the science of sleep without the relaxation of the mind; a heavy cessation of all the manlier faculties, from which men spring up with a resolution to relapse into it no more. But the country has at length recovered; Conservatism always the strength of England, is now the principle of its administration. Men eminent in the council and in the field have superseded a race whose names were unknown until they appeared in the *Gazette*, and whose names will be unknown from the moment when they drop from that record. But they have left us one advantage, the complete and final experience of a Whig cabinet. With the full command of opportunity, with the multitude at their backs, with the throne offering no obstacle, and with the nation prepared to give them a fair trial, their whole course had been one of failure. In peace, they left the country seven millions of debt, an increasing expenditure, and a decreasing revenue. How infinitely fortunate was it for the empire that they were not tried in war, that we were permitted to see the natural face of Whig imbecility without suffering from its follies in action—that we were allowed to see the machinery fall to pieces by its own flimsiness, without seeing it fall on our heads—that we retain the recollection of the cabinet, as we see a fragment of morbid anatomy in a museum, without feeling the diseased organ in our frame, and perishing of the desperate disease.

From Tait's Magazine.

THE TWO PARLIAMENTS.

Representatives of the people! Was ever grosser mockery conveyed by that hackneyed phrase than now! A few more days will exhibit the anomalous and, we would tell Sir Robert Peel, the ominous spectacle of two bodies of the representatives of the people sitting at the same time in London, now become a yearly and needful custom—the one body the undoubted delegates of the people, sent up to support their claims and to watch for their interests, responding to their needs and wishes; and the other set of representatives, or the great majority of them, diametrically opposed to every object which these delegates are sent to advocate. Which of these aggregations of men will the people consider their true representatives? It is a strange sight, this same chamber of delegates, to which successive governments, by the delay or denial of justice, are familiarizing the country. Would that we had one honest and fairly chosen house of representatives instead of two! The time is approaching to try for it—the era of a widely based, united national movement, resting upon the simple principle of the equal enjoyment of the suffrage. The organization of this movement—that of the united people against the oligarchs and monopolists—ought not to be lost sight of by the delegates about to assemble in London, and who, in anticipating the sure defeat of their main object, ought to have something to fall back upon. The sooner, for this purpose, that Sir Robert Peel is run up to the wall, and compelled to own that he, as the minister of the landowners, can grant nothing commensurate to the wants of the crisis, the better. Every ray of delusion will then be stripped away, and every single-hearted lover of the country will then know what he has to expect—and what to attempt for its salvation, if it may yet be saved.

From the North of England Magazine.

THE FREE TRADE MEMBERS.

The free traders in the House of Commons have but one safe course to pursue. It is a simple one. Their powers must be directed to a single great object, not wasted upon a multitude. Sent by the people into parliament for a given purpose, they are accountable to that people for the powers entrusted to them. They have no right to endanger their success by petty skirmishes, or still more petty broils. Nay, further, they should not permit any minor interests, however important in themselves, to interfere with the great principle to which they have devoted themselves. One word of advice before we conclude. There are men among the free traders whose abilities are of no ordinary extent; who are fitted to become leaders hereafter on subjects of foreign policy, of social and legislative reforms, of popular education. To them the very variety of their talents may be dangerous. Every trap will be laid for them which is known by long experience to the parliamentary poacher. Every artifice will be used to lure them on to a showy but wasteful expenditure of their energies. Let not such men grasp at a shadow for substance, or bewilder themselves by the multiplicity of their objects. While Atlas was devoting himself to the support of the world, he trusted to unsafe guardianship his golden apples.

From the British and Foreign Review.

CORN AND COMMERCE—SELL YOUR CONCESSIONS.

We have declared that almost unbounded markets for our manufactures await our approach. We have it in our power to open the tracks along which both supplies of food must flow, and masses of manufactured goods must move in return. In Europe, in Asia, in America, our commercial relations can be regulated, improved, extended—but not without care, judgment, and energy in the employment of the means at our command. These means we have already pointed out, but we must here point to them anew. The temper of the various governments, whose desire of enriching their subjects excludes our manufacturers, has been sufficiently shown of late by repeated failures in the attempt to bring them to treat on the basis of reciprocity. We have it in our power to force them to agree to our terms, by not indiscriminately allowing to all the benefit of the concessions which shall be made on the two important articles corn and sugar. If we lose this opportunity of placing our commercial relations on a sound footing, we may never regain it. We can only regain it when lost at the cost of reconstructing that odious complicated fabric, at which the first violent blow is about to be dealt. Had we the voices of a thousand warners, we would shout this warning with the might of earnest conviction in the ears of our countrymen; for we are aware that we stand alone, and that warnings which are re-echoed by no party are too apt to be disregarded: Nevertheless we persevere, and perchance our warning may not prove to be in vain. It has been said on all sides, you must bring forward but one measure at a time,—cheap food, and nothing but cheap food,—free trade, and nothing but free trade, or you will not be heard and nothing will be done. We disclaim the necessity of arguing with our countrymen as we should with fools or with children. If cheap food will buy free trade, is it not on that account the more desirable? If free trade will secure cheap food, is it not for that reason indispensable? We repeat it then—sell your concessions and purchase plenty,—sell your concessions and purchase industry, which will give the means of purchasing enjoyment. Sell them to Russia, to Austria, to Prussia, to Holland, to Brazil, to the United States. Sell them dear to those who have but little to give for them. Give them away only to the Hanse towns and to those states who have no concessions to make in return, because they have preceded you in adopting the system of free trade. But sell them, sell them! With all the world for buyers, it will be hard if you do not drive a profitable bargain.

THE BRITISH PRESS.

From the London Times.

IMPORTATION OF CORN—THE DEBATE AND THE DIVISION.

Mr Villiers's motion having now been rejected, after a tedious debate of three nights, by a majority of 303, we do hope that Parliament will be permitted to proceed to the business of legislation. Mr Cobden and his party have obtained a very decisive expression of the sense of the House of Commons on their views,—Lord John Russell and his party

have also succeeded in eliciting an unequivocal opinion upon theirs—and it is now high time that the proposition of Sir Robert Peel should be definitively considered. That the House is disposed to accept it is, we think, clear,—that its acceptance (if nothing better can be substituted) will be beneficial to the country is no less certain; and, as Sir Robert Peel justly says, if it is to become law, then it is clearly for the public interest that it should become law as speedily as possible. Even its opponents admit that its immediate effect will probably be the introduction into the market of a very considerable quantity of foreign corn, either now in bond or ready to be imported. If so, the people will appreciate any proceedings which may be resorted to for the purpose of delaying a measure which is inevitable, and which is not alleged by any one to be in itself injurious. Those who endeavour to obstruct its progress through parliament, after having fully ascertained that they cannot induce the legislature to adopt their own views in preference, are doing their best to keep a large supply of foreign corn out of the country, and so to maintain high prices, and aggravate, as far as in them lies, the distress which they pretend so pathetically to commiserate.

From the Morning Chronicle.

The importance of the debate on Mr Villier's motion is not to be estimated by the numbers on the division. The argument of the peculiar duties on land, which has been so much relied on as giving a claim to a protecting duty, was demolished by Mr P. Stewart. The protection is now claimed merely on the ground of regard for those who have entered into arrangements under the existing law. Justice and protection are now discovered, at least till it can be shown that land is subject to peculiar burdens. The corn monopoly has received a blow, during these debates, from which it cannot easily recover. If the country only estimate as it ought the advantage obtained, and follow it up properly, we do not despair of seeing monopoly at its last gasp.

From the Morning Post.

The concession made by the new plan—if anything in it can be fairly called by that name—is not to the violent and noisy agitators, but to the reasonable portion of the public who complained that trade in corn was too much restricted, and that various irregularities were induced by the existing scale, which irregularities encouraged gambling, to the detriment of the public, while steady merchants were repelled from dealing in so precarious a trade as that of importing corn. The present government admits the justice of these complaints, and undertakes to remove the cause of them, as far as that is possible, having regard to the protection of native industry and vested capital from an excess of foreign competition. The government expects that great practical benefit will be derived from the new plan if it become law—that a steady trade in grain will be established, sufficient for the wants of the kingdom, but not such as will overwhelm native production. And the government also expects that, when these good practical results have been seen and felt, and when there is no just ground, or very little just ground, of complaint against the law, the agitation against it will soon become as contemptible in its effect as it has always been in every other particular.

London Times.

THE SLIDING SCALE—A SAFE STEP. We much approve the tone in which the present government declare that they eachway all empirical pretension—that they aim at safe rather than brilliant, practical rather than speculative measures—measures which may work well on the statute book, and not merely look well and serve the purpose of a moment in a parliamentary campaign—measures more sound than showy, calculated to do at all events some good, without any harm. 'It is easy for the learned gentleman,' said Sir Robert Peel, referring to the speech of Mr Roebuck, 'it is easy for the learned gentleman to call on me to discard all class prejudices, to show, not perhaps that I am in advance, but, at all events, that I do not lag behind the intelligence of the age, and to bring forward some grand and comprehensive scheme that would stamp me at once with the character of a great statesman. I will tell the hon. and learned gentleman what I think belongs more to the true character of the minister of such a country as this. I think it would be more in keeping with that true character for me to aspire to none of those magnificent characteristics which he has described, and that the wisest and safest course for me to adopt is to effect as much practical good as I can, and not, after announcing some great principle calculated to win for

me a great deal of popularity, to find at last that the practical part of the subject was in precisely the same state in which it was before I began.' This is that just and intelligible language which the people of England appreciate. It is full of that quality for which Englishmen are most favorably known—common sense: and if Sir Robert Peel is as ready as he expresses to forego the reputation of greatness for the sake of steady practical utility, he may depend upon it that his present sacrifice will be found no less politic than it is honorable, not the less politic certainly from its contrast with the policy of its predecessors.

London Morning Post.

THE MANUFACTURERS.

What! is this great nation to become a miserable horde of weavers of cotton for the whole universe, that those enlightened, generous, and patriotic personages, the millowning capitalists, may monopolize everything—that they may run riot in gross excess and vulgar vanity? No; their upstart rapacity—their monstrous self conceit, which hardens their hearts and makes them insensible to justice, honour, and kindly feeling—may lead them to dream of this; but the British House of Commons will not pander to their wretched prejudices, and more wretched selfishness, which some persons call 'liberality,' and science, and so forth. Do these millowning brawlers want all England to be such a den of debauchery in what the manufacturers call 'good times,' and such a receptacle of gaunt starvation in what the manufacturers call 'bad times,' as Manchester is? Is this the consummation of bliss for the English working people to which they look? We rejoice to think of the answer which the House of Commons has given to these people. Let them think of the majority of 123! Let them remember that their busy falsehoods and their base cupidity have found in the House of Commons their just reward.

London Courier.

THE ANTI CORN LAW AGITATION. The prompt and manly declaration by Lord Melbourne, in the House of Peers, on the first day of the session, that with the creation or the prevalence of existing distress the corn laws were in no respect chargeable, a declaration tardily re-echoed since in the Commons' House by Lord John Russell, appears to have been 'a heavy blow and great discouragement' to the anti corn law press, and to the anti corn law faction, both within and without the house. For months by-gone distress and corn laws figured daily in the close relationship or cause and effect, which every Radical writer condemned to the drudgery of one column or more per day of leading and lenden matter, and with every ranter whose only chance of cheers at public meetings lay in the volume of rigmorale ringing the changes to the same tune. Nay, even with the reverend revolutionist it was the staple text from which ribaldry and ruffianism had to be preached, and under the standard of which the Rev. Mr Spencer proposed to embody the picked corps of 1 thousand Manchester desperadoes, who are peaceably to beleaguer the houses of the landed gentry, and assist Parliament to a right determination on the abolition of the corn law question. Until now these ominous repudiations by the two parliamentary chiefs of the stock material of anti corn law agitation have been responded to only by the sulky silence of the factious press thus slighted, and the agitators thus disowned; but with the temporary termination of the anti corn law debates, and the decisive manifesto of a ministerial majority, the rout of writers and ranters, finding their very craft in peril of extinction, are taking heart from desperation, and are rehoisting the old banners, under which a show of editorial fight could be made if victory were past hope, and itinerant Smiths and spouters pick up a living, if anti corn law bazaars forbade the hope of a fortune. The Chronicle leads the van of this forlorn hope, and commences by a clumsy attack on Sir Robert Peel for saying that which the two Whig lords had said before. 'When,' says that veracious journal, 'he said the corn law was not chargeable with any portion of the existing distress, he said that which he did not himself believe.' It is quite natural for dishonest dealers in flash wares, made, like Peter's razors, for sale, to measure other people's consciences by their own standard.

London Shipping Gazette.

EXCHEQUER BILL FRAUD.

The subject of the Exchequer bill fraud, which has been so frequently fixed for discussion, both in the Houses of Lords and Commons, and as frequently postponed, it was certainly thought would be brought forward in the latter House yesterday; it was, however, again put off till to-morrow, when we trust it will positively be debated. The discussions on